

Fort Hood Soldiers support National Guard troops in Louisiana

By 1st Lt. Christopher Lyon
Co. B, 57th Sig. Bn.

Soldiers of Company B, 57th Signal Battalion, deployed to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La., Jan. 27 to support the 1-34th Brigade Combat Team of the Minnesota Army National Guard.

Maj. Alfonso Mandujano, 57th Sig. Bn. executive officer, said this mission is crucial to the development of the unit for real world missions such as Iraq, which for many Fort Hood units is a foreseeable reality.

"As signal Soldiers, we don't have many opportunities to train as we fight," Co. B Commander

Capt. Richard Michael stated. "This mission will allow us to simulate a combat environment while serving real customers – it just doesn't get any better than this."

Forty-four Soldiers and 43 pieces of signal equipment will be involved in the 30-day rotation, marking the first major

training event not located on Fort Hood since the unit's return from Iraq.

According to Co. B 1st Sgt. Marlon Anding, "A success for this mission is a success in our unit's ability to train and prepare our Soldiers and equipment for combat."

The Soldiers of Co. B had

only a minimal amount of time to prepare for the JRTC mission. They had less than three weeks to react to this mission request and execute all pre-deployment and deployment operations, to include shipment of all equipment and Soldiers.

"Without a doubt this turned out to be an extremely difficult

challenge for the company's leadership," Anding said.

"It feels like we didn't have time to think, only time to react," Platoon Leader 2nd Lt. Lauren Herwig stated.

Herwig's husband will return from a yearlong tour in Iraq while she is at JRTC, but she is eager for the challenge.